

## Your Food Stamp Application

When you apply for Food Stamps, you (or someone you ask to do it for you) talk with a worker. You give us information about yourself and other people in your household. You may have to show us papers like pay stubs or medical bills. The worker looks at the number of people, the resources and the amount of income and expenses in your household to see if you can get Food Stamps and how much.

If you can get Food Stamps, you will only be approved for a certain length of time. Most people can get Food Stamps for 12 months before they must apply again. Households with elderly or disabled adults and no earned income may get Food Stamps for 24 months before they must apply again.

The amount of Food Stamps you will get during this time usually does not change from the amount you will get for your first full month of Food Stamps.

## Mid-Certification Review

All households will get a Mid-Certification Report form. Households with elderly or disabled adults and no earned income will receive a form for a 12 month review. All other households will receive a form for a 6 month review. The form will be mailed to you. If you have no changes to report, all you have to do is check the box that says you do not have any changes to report, sign

the form, and return it to the Family Support office.

Your Food Stamp case may be closed if you don't return your form on time.

Changes that we knew about, but did not act upon earlier will be considered when we complete your mid-certification review.

## What changes do I have to report for Food Stamps?

You must contact your worker when your household's total income before taxes or anything else is subtracted goes over the income limit for your family size.

There are other changes you must report on your Mid-Certification Report form or the next time you apply for Food Stamps. We will tell you what those are when we send you the Mid-Certification Report, or you reapply.

If you are getting other kinds of assistance like TANF, Child Care, or MO HealthNet, you must still report changes for these programs. The things you have to tell us are different for each program.

## When do Changes have to be Reported for Food Stamps?

If your household income goes over the maximum limit, you must tell us by the tenth day of the month after the month that the change happened.

## How do I report changes?

You will get a "Change Report" form when your case is approved. This "Change Report" form will show what you must report and the income limit for your household. Do not return this form unless you have a change in your household income which goes over the limit for your household size.

You can also report changes on the internet by going to the Missouri Benefits Center on the State of Missouri Social Services website at <http://www.dss.mo.gov/fsd/>

***Households are not required to report changes in medical expenses or when income decreases; however, doing so and providing verification of the increase in expenses or decrease in income may increase your Food Stamp benefits.***

## How will I know when my income goes over the limit for my household size?

When we approve your Food Stamp case, we send you a "Claimant Action Notice". This letter tells you:

- the amount of Food Stamp benefits you will get;
- the length of time you may get Food Stamps;
- the date your Mid-Certification Review form is due; and
- the maximum amount of income your household can have before you must tell us if your income has increased.

## What happens if I report something that I don't have to report?

When you tell us about a change, or when we learn new information, we enter it in your record. Each time a change is entered, we look at the record to decide if we need to adjust the amount of Food Stamps that you get.

If you should get more Food Stamps, we will increase the benefits.

If you should be getting fewer Food Stamp benefits, we may not take the action except under certain conditions.

- If it is a change that you have to report, we will decrease your benefits or close your case.
- If it is not a change that you have to report, and it is not a change that we are required to act on, we will not change your benefits.

When you return your Mid-certification Review form or the next time you apply for

Food Stamps, we will look at your current circumstances and your benefits may change.

### **CIVIL RIGHTS LAW**

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Any person who believes s/he may have been the object of such discrimination may file a written complaint with the County office, the Family Support Division, or with the United States Department of Agriculture, giving the specific details as to how and when the discrimination took place.

Send complaints to the Office of Civil Rights,  
P. O. Box 1527, Jefferson City, Missouri 65102.

For more information, contact your local Family Support Division office.

Missouri Department of Social Services  
P. O. Box 1527  
Jefferson City, MO 65102

*To file a complaint of discrimination write:* USDA, Director,  
Office of Civil Rights Room 326-W, Whitten Building 1400  
Independence Avenue, S. W. Washington, DC 20250-9410  
or call (voice and TDD): (202) 720-5964

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# SIMPLIFIED REPORTING FOR THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM

Reporting changes is easier – now you only have to report when your household's gross income exceeds 130% of the federal poverty level.